

Questions from Councillors Requiring a Written Response

Responses

WQ1

WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Democratic Services outline the objectives, both financial and strategic, behind the 'Unlocking Loxley' programme and confirm the cost of this programme both in financial terms and in colleague hours spent delivering it?

Response from Councillor Sally Longford:

Executive Board approved the Unlocking Loxley 2019 project in October 2018 with the allocation of £1.823m budget (capital) to deliver the works by December 2019.

1. Aim and Objectives

The aim of this project is to maximise the efficient use of the space available in Loxley House by:

- ✓ creating a customer hub on the ground floor of Loxley House to deliver front facing services of the Council and
- ✓ delivering smarter working strategies by linking in with existing IT programmes to enable more flexible ways of working for Council employees.

This project is driven by links to:

- ✓ the Council's Strategic Regeneration Programme through the facilitation of the anticipated disposal of two sites, Angel Row Library and Housing Aid and
- ✓ the Corporate Asset Management Plan, through the optimisation of use of existing operational buildings.

The objectives of this project are to:

- ✓ relocate the Revenue and Benefits team currently based at Angel Row to Loxley House in time for the planned redevelopment of the Angel Row Library building.
- ✓ relocate the Housing Aid team based at Parliament Street to allow for the sale of the current Housing Aid building for redevelopment.
- ✓ provide an improved service offer for citizens, through the creation of a customer hub, by locating the Revenue and Benefits team and Housing Aid team alongside other services, in a convenient location, which is easily accessible.
- ✓ introduce smarter ways of working in Loxley House to encourage more collaborative working amongst teams based in the building and to help release working spaces in the building to accommodate teams moving in the building.

2. Project costs

The approved budget for the project is £1.823m (capital).

The Scape Regional Framework has been used to appoint a contractor to carry out the reconfiguration works in Loxley House. For this value of the works, G.F.Tomlinson (GFT) is the contractor available from the framework. GFT carried out

Phase 1a of the Loxley Works and therefore, has knowledge of the building and some of the wider aspirations of the first phase.

	Approved costs	Updated costs
Provisional construction costs for ground floor provided by the Contractor (including prelims and fees), plus reconfiguration costs for floors 1-4.	£1,528,000	£1,497,000
Other construction costs (works at Southglade and Aspley Children Centre)	£ 22,000	£1,000
Revenue costs	£169,000	£266,000
SRB top slice (capital and revenue)	£53,000	£51,000
Contingency	£ 220,000	£177,000
Total	£1,992,000	£1,992,000

3. Dedicated Staff Time

The table below outlines the number of hours spent by members of staff supporting the project delivery from across different teams within the Council from project inception (November 2019) to completion (January 2020). This includes the dedicated time approved for the project.

	Hours
IT	641
FM	515
Change	3848
Project Management	7252

NB: Property, Finance and Design Services staff time costs are included within the approved costs of the project.

4. Additional Information

A. Project Scope:

The scope of the project includes the following:

1. creation of a customer hub on the ground floor of Loxley House with front facing services from Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Housing Aid (HA) and Nottingham Revenue and Benefits (NRB) from Angel Row.
2. creating a new entrance to Loxley House on Trent Street to facilitate access for citizens using the Customer Hub.
3. introducing smarter working practices in Loxley House. This will enable more efficient ways of working and improve the working environment in the building.
4. decommissioning of existing Housing Aid building on Lower Parliament Street and Henry Whipple.
5. minor reconfiguration works at Southglade Children Centre and Aspley Children Centre.

This project will introduce smarter working practices in Loxley House only and not across the whole organisation. Targeted interventions will be used to encourage teams based in this building to adopt new ways of working.

Smarter working will be facilitated by:

- the existing IT programmes and infrastructure such as equipment upgrades, Skype and the provision of mobile phones subject to business needs
- encouraging teams to use their desk allocation more efficiently, with the aim of achieving an average of 7:10 desk ratio on average across the council.

The proposal to work smarter will:

- support staff to feel empowered to work where and when to optimise their performance
- improve collaboration between teams, facilitated by new work environment – both in the Customer Hub and Nottingham City Council Teams
- provide services/teams and individuals with the opportunity to focus on work being what they do not where they do it
- increased flexibility driving reduction in desk usage
- maximise benefit from existing IT offer including office 365, Skype, accessing emails from personal mobiles, remote access
- reinforce flexi desk approach to maximise efficiency of building, reduce desk numbers, create a more modern 'feel' and facilitate easy cleaning

In order to accommodate the DWP front office team, Housing Aid and NRB teams move to Loxley House on the ground floor to create a customer hub, a number of teams are being moved within the building.

B. Benefits

The benefits of this project provide a strong case for proceeding, meeting strategic objectives and aligning with other programmes of work that continue the ambitious approach taken by the Council to improve services and efficiency.

- ✓ Facilitating an investment and a regeneration opportunity for the Council through the disposal and redevelopment of Angel Row Library.
 - ✓ Facilitating a capital receipt and a contribution to the wider regeneration of the Sneinton Market area through the disposal of the current Housing Aid site.
 - ✓ Contribute to the objectives of the Corporate Asset Management Plan, including the optimisation of operational property and ensuring it is appropriate for the delivery of services.
 - ✓ Delivering improvements to citizens through the co-location of services within Loxley House.
 - ✓ Introducing smarter ways of working in order to be able to improve the working environment for staff at Loxley House.
 - ✓ Creating additional revenue through rental income from partners relocating to Loxley House.
 - ✓ Savings through reduction in operational costs associated with operating assets in poor condition, consolidating these services within Loxley House.
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WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ADULT CARE AND LOCAL TRANSPORT AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Local Transport outline the target waiting time for a citizen to receive a visit from an Occupational Therapist; and how this compares with the average wait time achieved in practice?

Response from Councillor Adele Williams:

The Occupational Therapy (OT) service is central to the Adult Social Care Department's Better Lives Better Outcome Strategy which is supporting citizens to achieve better outcomes through improved independence. The service is also supporting delivery of the Department's Big Ticket savings. Demand for the service is increasing on an ongoing basis and citizens' needs are also becoming more complex. This experience is reflected nationally.

As a result, the service prioritises referrals according to risk. Our targets are all internally set targets, but are consistent with best practice. The target for people with an urgent need is for them to be contacted within 48 hours of referral and to have received a home visit within 5 working days. The service is achieving this target. Our target for people receiving a reablement service is for them to be allocated and assessed within 2 weeks. The service is meeting this target.

Our target for allocation of people with a routine need is 28 days. We are currently not meeting this target and the current waiting time for people with a routine need is 98 days.

The OT service also operates an early intervention service which provides assessment and provision of low level equipment for people with this level of need. The target for allocation is 4 weeks and the current waiting time is 5 weeks.

A benchmarking exercise indicated that our OT performance compares favourably with that of two close local authority neighbours. Data shared with us highlighted that the two other local authorities have urgent need targets of 20 working days and 28 days respectively and routine targets of 90 days. Neither local authority is meeting their routine targets with one operating an average waiting time of 170 days and the other of 180 days.

Our OT service currently has a vacancy rate of 40% that it is working hard to address; however, there are ongoing recruitment difficulties which the Head of Service is seeking to mitigate against through the establishment of apprenticeships and a full workforce review and development of an appropriate workforce strategy supported by HR.

Difficulties in recruiting sufficient OTs is a national problem and our regional neighbours are all experiencing similar problems.

WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE, GROWTH AND THE CITY CENTRE AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Growth and the City Centre provide a breakdown of the number of empty business units in the City, split out on a year by year basis over the last five years?

Response from Councillor Sam Webster:

Below is an overview of empty business property using the annual National Non-Domestic Return 1 to Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government. A snapshot of empty properties across the whole city is taken for this in January.

Date	No. of empty properties	Total no. of properties
Jan 2015	1744	11284 (March 2015)
Jan 2016	1726	11219 (March 2016)
Jan 2017	2547	11508 (March 2017)
Jan 2018	2531	11991 (March 2018)
Jan 2019	2714	11959 (January 2019)
Nov 2019	2644	11940 (November 2019)

WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR ANDREW RULE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Given that there is no longer a national measure of cleanliness between cities, could the Portfolio Holder for Communities confirm how the controlling group's pledge to make Nottingham the cleanest City, over the next Council term, will be measured?

Response from Councillor Rebecca Langton:

Thank you for your question Councillor Rule.

You are correct; there is no longer a national competition between authorities. The Chartered Institute of Waste Management (CIWM) did for many years hold an annual award for the title of 'cleanest city' in categories of small, medium, and big cities. The award was based on a detailed submission of cleansing strategy and operations, followed by multiple and detailed unannounced visits to assess standards.

Nottingham won the 'cleanest big city' award in 2014 and was the overall 'gold award' winner for all categories.

However, whilst there is no national competition, we still hold an ambition and vision to be 'Britain's Cleanest Big City'. This ambition is based on a deep understanding of the importance of the public realm and cleansing standards on the quality of people's lives, the perception and impression of neighbourhoods and the city centre, and a recognition that getting the 'basic hygiene' factors right impacts on feelings of pride in the local area and tackling issues of antisocial behaviour.

We have continued to 'measure' our cleansing standards, and that involves some technical measures known as the 'cleansing index' and also volume measures like incidents of fly-tips, graffiti, and dog fouling and how quickly we respond to such reports and remove them. Just as important as these 'hard measures' are 'perception measures' and how citizens perceive the cleanliness of the local area and the city centre, and we continue to capture these measures via the annual CITIZENS survey and the RESPECT survey. Other things we have been doing:

National Bench Marking Standards			
1	National Awards	2019	2020
	APSE Best Service Awards Street Cleansing Street scene – Public Realm Awards	We were a finalist in the APSE Public Service Award for 2019.	We will be reapplying for the 2020 award and we are very hopeful of winning the prize.
2	APSE Street scene Bench Marking Network.	Work is currently being carried out to update our performance reports and participation in the national bench performance network. National performance report to be confirmed.	Maintain and improve family group position.
3	Keep Britain Tidy - Green Flag Awards - and Community Green Flag Awards There are 8 criteria for achieving this award including criteria for cleansing, graffiti and dog fouling.	There are currently 68 Green Flag Parks in Nottingham. This is the highest number in all the Core Cities.	We hope to retain all 68 and apply for a further 7 sites giving a total of 75.
4	Highways England: Independent Roadside Cleanliness Survey carried out by Keep Britain Tidy	In 2019 we achieved a Passing grade of B&B+ as set out in the code of practice on Litter and Refuse	Target for 2020 is to move to B+B+ standards
5	City Centre Purple Flag Award Standards to ensure the night-time economy is supported through a Safe and Clean City	Award up held and Achieved	Up hold the award.

	Centre. Association of Town and City Management.		
Local Performance Indicators			
	Fly Tipping Removal Target to reduce fly tipping	6828 incidents year to date	6828 - 5% reduction 6486
	Remove all graffiti Target to remove all within 48hrs	1467incidents year to date 1306 89%	Improve to 90%
	Remove dog fouling Number of incidents resolved	3729	3729 - 5% reduction 3542
Local Proactive Campaigns and Activity			
1	Deep cleans: <i>Basic definition of a deep clean</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter removal; • Hoeing out back lines; • Detritus removed from channels; • Scrubbing and jet washing pavements; • Steam cleaning the bins; • Painting street furniture, bollards and railings(as required 	We are committed to carrying out 120 deep cleans per annum However, we would normally carry out more in wards where the cleanliness index is lower.	Continue to work close to ward councillors to identify problem areas and carry out through weeks/ days of action.
2	Spring Cleans: Annual Community Clean up campaign coordinated by Keep Britain Tidy. The campaign also features as a major corporate publicity campaign.	We completed over 50 Community Litter picks between March – June 2019, with Nottingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development Officers taking the lead in organising the litter picks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clumber Street clean up: This is Nottingham's busiest city centre shopping street. On an average Saturday, over 2million people use the street. 50 litter picks in 20 wards • Over 1,000 people took part • 80 primary schools and 25,000 children 	Continue to promote and deliver a spring clean campaign in 2020

		took part	
3	Clean Champions Our Clean Champions make a positive difference in our city by carrying out litter picks, reporting issues in the neighbourhood, supporting local services e.g. street scene colleagues	We currently have a cohort of approximately 500 clean champions. We carried out over 50 events as part of the spring clean programme and many clean champions continue to clean up their local areas. 'Thank you' event was carried out at the Council House in July.	Carry out a promotional campaign to attract more clean champions. Host a 'Thank You' event. Continue to support throughout the year.
4	City Centre and City Wide Bin Replacement	We currently have the Big Belly Solar Compacting bins in the City Centre. Some of these have come to the end of their natural life and as such need replacing. We have scheduled to replace the 170 bins in two batches. We have identified the first 85 bins to be replaced. This will give a refreshed and energised look to our City Centre. Some of the Good Quality Big Belly Bins will be relocated within the neighbourhoods.	Second year of the bin replacement programme will replace a further 40-50 bins

Looking ahead, we are now at the forefront of leading a new measure of 'cleanliness and quality of the public realm' by embracing the APSE 'LAMS' system (which is a Land Audit Management System). We are one of the big city pilots and are currently working with APSE and training our teams to implement this.

The system is based on a series of surveys of randomly selected locations. All areas maintained are allocated a zone type:

- Zone 1 – High amenity
- Zone 2 – General amenity
- Zone 3 – Low maintenance

Areas are graded and awarded points:

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- Grade A – 3 points
- Grade B – 2 points (acceptable standard)
- Grade C – 1 point
- Grade D – 0 points

Grading is based on a visual inspection with full photographic guidance provided and inspectors simply indicate the grade that each transect is assessed at. This data is

inputted into a simple spreadsheet that allocates points and calculates the overall score.

The system is designed so that it has a low-resource intensity and inspections can be conducted by existing staff such as team leaders. This system is used to measure the levels of flyposting, litter, flytipping, dog fouling, bin cleanliness, bin structure, bins overflowing and hard surface weeds.

We will engage in benchmarking with other cities who engage in LAMS, and will seek to ensure we remain 'Britain's Cleanest Big City'.

As you can see we have a very comprehensive performance framework for monitoring all of our progress towards delivering the Cleanest Big City Corporate Objective. We believe that the sum of all the activities above remains consistently better than other larger cities and we remain confident that we will be able to fully justify our claim to the Cleanest Big City Title.

WQ5

WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR MARIA WATSON OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE, GROWTH AND THE CITY CENTRE AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm the estimated amount of interest that the Council is set to earn from the reported recent loan to Robin Hood Energy, should it be paid back in full as reportedly expected by the end of the financial year?

The response is exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information relating to the financial position of the Council (or another business) and, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because disclosure of the information could prejudice ongoing negotiations.

WQ6

WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR KIRSTY JONES OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND HERITAGE AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm how many requests for homelessness assistance have been made to the Council, compared to the same point last year?

Response from Councillor Linda Woodings:

From 01/07/2018 to 15/11/2018 there were 1602 approaches to Housing Aid from different households (families and singles) who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. From 01/07/2019 to 15/11/2019 there were 2022 approaches (a 26.2% increase).

WQ7

WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR KIRSTY JONES OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND HERITAGE AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm, according to council figures, how many incidents of rough sleeping have been recorded across the city, compared to the same point last year?

Response from Councillor Linda Woodings:

	Number of incidents of rough sleeping found on November monthly count	Number of individuals found rough sleeping Jan-Nov
2018	34	1275
2019	30	1489

WQ8

WRITTEN QUESTION ASKED BY COUNCILLOR KEVIN CLARKE OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ADULT CARE AND LOCAL TRANSPORT AT THE MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL HELD ON 11 NOVEMBER 2019

Could the Portfolio Holder explain why Chippenham Road in Bestwood is yet to be resurfaced, despite resurfacing works having been scheduled to take place between March and October of this year, and provide a new time frame for this work?

Response from Councillor Adele Williams:

I can confirm no works are planned for Chippenham Road this year, 2019. Unfortunately, Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) legal orders were put up prematurely this year in error, which has caused some confusion. This notice was promptly taken down. I am pleased to confirm that Chippenham Road is included in the planned preventative programme for 2020/21. In the meantime, I will ensure that the local Highway Safety Inspector will continue to inspect and address any safety defects.
